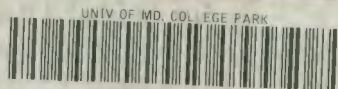


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REPORT TO THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF  
MARYLAND AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE  
BY H. E. ALVORD - PRESIDENT.

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## MARYLAND AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE.

REPORT TO THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES,

BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE COLLEGE.

Alvord, Henry Elijah

*Gentlemen of the Board of Trustees:*

At the suggestion of members of the Board, a special report is now rendered, regarding the affairs of this Institution during the last four months, and in this form, that members may read it at their leisure.

At the regular Quarterly meeting of the Board in December, 1889, the duty of preparing the Biennial Report to the General Assembly, as required by law, was assigned to the Executive Committee. That Committee met in Baltimore on the 30th of December, discussed and decided upon the substance of the Report, and authorized the chairman of the committee to perfect the same and transmit it to the Legislature. The committee made a brief report to the Board at an adjourned meeting held in Baltimore on the 9th of January last.

The Biennial Report for the College, in duplicate, accompanied by the Annual Report of the Experiment Station for the year 1889, was completed and transmitted to both branches of the General Assembly by the chairman of the Executive Committee of the Board, under date of January 20th. I took these copies of the Report to Annapolis in person, submitted them first to His Excellency, the Governor, and with his approval then delivered them respectively to the President of the Senate and Speaker of the House of Delegates.

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The Report proper of the Board of Trustees, as thus addressed to the General Assembly, contained three specific recommendations regarding legislation for the benefit of the Institution, viz:

- 1st. That the Report should be published by the State and a large edition printed, especially of the Experiment Station portion, for general distribution.
- 2d. That appropriations of money should be made for the College:—
  - (a). To contribute to its maintenance and development;
  - (b). To pay off the existing debt of the Institution; and
  - (c). To provide for needed repairs and improvements.
- 3d. That the General Assembly should "consider the expediency of reducing the number of this Board of Trustees," on the ground of convenience and economy.

The Report having been rendered, I proceeded, as the executive officer of the Board, to do what seemed proper, to procure appropriate action upon its several recommendations.

*I. Printing.* In each branch the Report was referred to the Committee on Agriculture. In the House of Delegates, an order was introduced from the Agricultural Committee, on the 24th of January, for the printing of the Report, was referred to the Committee on Printing and by it reported favorably, and passed on the 29th of January, by a vote of, yeas, 76—nays, none.

This order directed the printing of 2,000 copies of the entire Report (College and Station), and of 7,000 copies additional of the Station Report alone, all to be delivered to the President of the College, who is required to distribute fifty (50) copies of the Experiment Station Report as instructed by each Senator and Delegate. These Reports are now at the College and are being distributed. There are a few copies of the College Report bound separately. One copy each of the whole and the two parts, have been mailed to every member of the Board, and others can be mailed as may be ordered. The Station Reports go free in the mails, the College Reports require postage.

Although the State Printer received his authority and his "copy" the last of January, his work was so fragmentary and



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dilatatory that the College Report alone (62 pages) was not delivered to members of the Assembly until the 18th of March, almost too late to be of material benefit to the Institution, in connection with pending legislation. I went to Annapolis once every week, and did all in my power to expedite this work. After the last date named I was in Annapolis nearly every other day, and staid at the printing office several nights to try and get the Station Report done. Finally, as late as March 21st, the State Printer acknowledged his inability to finish it during the session, and transferred the work to Baltimore. The last of the printing was done there on the 28th of March, and on the 31st copies of the complete Station Report were distributed at the State House. This was too late to secure the desired order for printing the like Report next January. But the printing done at this time has cost \$1,700, and has saved a large part of this sum for the College and the Experiment Station. Although the edition seems large, there is a very active demand for these Reports, and it will not be long, from present appearances, before the supply will be exhausted.

*II. Appropriations.* Upon orders introduced from the Committees on Agriculture, a Select Committee was appointed in each Branch of the Assembly, to visit the College and report upon its condition and needs. The Joint Committee on Public Institutions also decided to visit the College. But, although I exerted myself to secure visits from these committees, and several appointments were made, only one of the committees actually visited the institution.

The Select Committee of the House of Delegates spent the whole of Wednesday, the 5th of February, at the College, and were accompanied by five other members, making a party of eight. This committee performed its work very thoroughly, and ten days later submitted a written report, which was spread upon the Journal of the House, the 18th of February, and a copy of which accompanies this paper. This report as a whole, was very favorable to the College. It confirmed and endorsed the Report of the Trustees, in the main, and made specific recommendations to the House of Delegates, as follows:

*1st.* That the annual appropriation of \$6,000 for the College be continued.



2d. That a special appropriation be made, mainly to pay the College debt, of \$8,000, payable July 1st, 1890, and \$6,000, payable one year later.

It will be observed, that this report was not only signed by all of the Select Committee, but concurred in by all but one of the visiting members.

As the Trustee Report had asked that appropriate committees of the Assembly should visit the College, investigate and report upon the expediency of action upon the recommendations of the Board, it was deemed best to "rest the case" of the College, in the House of Delegates, upon the report and recommendations of its own committee, specially constituted to consider and act upon this subject.

Accordingly, my endeavor from that date was to support the Select Committee, in its two specific propositions, to continue the \$6,000 annuity, and to specially provide for paying the College debt. To that end, the favorable editorials and comments of numerous newspapers in the State, were brought to the attention of Delegates, particularly members of the Ways and Means Committee, and, while no signatures were solicited, facilities were provided for petitions signed by substantial farmers and taxpayers in all parts of the State, asking the General Assembly to be generous to the College. Such petitions were presented in the Senate and the House, from nearly every agricultural organization of prominence in the State.

Such was the progress of affairs, when the regular quarterly meeting of the Board of Trustees took place at the College, on the 14th of March. Only five (5) members attended, and the principal business was the appointment of a special committee of the Board, to visit Annapolis, in the interest of the College. This duty was performed on the 20th and 21st of March. Messrs. Walsh, Seibert, Silver and Biedler, with the President of the College, constituted this committee. The committee conferred with the Governor, and the State Comptroller co-operated with them. A few days later, the Committee on Ways and Means incorporated the \$6,000 annuity item for the College, in the regular appropriation bill, and reported favorably a special relief bill for the College, appropriating \$14,000 to pay its debt. The former,



although it met with some opposition in the House, was duly passed by both House and Senate. The special bill was bitterly, and in many respects unreasonably and unfairly, attacked in the House, and defeated on its second reading.

No attempt was made in the Senate to revive the proposition for a special appropriation, after the defeat of the House bill.

I may add that, so far as I know, apart from the effort to enlighten the Committee of Delegates which visited the College, and the action of the Trustee Committee above mentioned, there was no special canvass made on behalf of the College, and no importuning of members. The case was allowed to rest upon its merits, as presented in the Report of the Select Committee of the House, supported by the abundant evidences of a favorable public opinion. But these were not enough to counteract the effects of a strong under-current of prejudice and numerous false assertions and injurious suggestions which were industriously circulated by enemies who concealed their tracks so carefully that it was impossible to definitely trace them. These calumnies were but too readily accepted, to the great injury of the institution, yet no one seemed to know their origin.

*III. Board of Trustees.* The recommendation of the Board for a reduction in its number, was first considered in the Senate. The Attorney-General addressed a letter on the subject to the Committee on Agriculture, and at the request of its chairman, I explained to that committee what I understood to be the general scope of the suggestion.

A bill was then formulated, based upon what was known as the Mackall Bill of the Legislature of 1888. As the recommendation of the report preceded the organization of the General Assembly of 1890, it was manifestly impersonal, but at the suggestion of the committee, I described the bill, before its introduction, to every official affected by it, and they severally expressed approval of its purpose. This bill was passed by the Senate without discussion, but soon after reaching the House, amendments were urged by several different parties, some of which would have been manifestly unjust to invested interests, and controversy became certain.

Informed of these facts, I ventured to urge the chairman of the committee in charge to stay proceedings, so as to avoid an agita-



tion which might prejudice the College appropriation bills, and then, being unwilling to assume any further responsibility in such a delicate matter, I reported the situation to the chairman of the Executive Committee of this Board. That gentleman visited Annapolis, and after conference with the Committee on Agriculture of the House, proposed a compromise measure, which was evidently intended to harmonize conflicting views and secure an equitable adjustment. This was adopted by the committee, as an amendment to the Senate bill; the committee also adopted a further amendment, at the solicitation of other parties, and after the bill was reported to the House, other amendments were adopted. As the result of these several changes and delays, the bill failed to become a law. The Board of Trustees consequently remains in all respects as it was before the recent legislative session.

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Comments are now added upon certain facts, partly consequent upon the action of the Assembly, which are worthy of consideration at this time, as bearing upon the present and future welfare of the Institution.

*Finances* :—The adjournment of the Legislature of 1890, leaves the College in a much more comfortable condition, financially, than it was two years ago. The income for the next two years will be practically the same as for the last two. But its liabilities are much less and in much better shape. Instead of sixty clamorous creditors, great and small, there are now but one-fourth of that number, and there is no reason why these should not be reduced by half within the next three months, and all the outstanding negotiable notes can be paid within that time. Two years ago this month, the bank held \$6,000 of the College notes, secured upon its future income; at this date only \$1,500 of the income (due in July) has been anticipated and discounted. The property, too, is in a much better condition of repair than it was two years ago. While there will be little, if any, means available for special development, economical management will enable the College to be conducted on its present basis for the next two years, and during this time the debt can be reduced from two-fifths to



one-half, while all essential repairs and current needs can be provided for.

We have secured for two years to come, what a stock-man would call a "maintenance ration;" it will enable us to hold our own, but we cannot be expected, as a College, to either grow or fatten much, upon it.

*Public Opinion:*—There are other things which the Institution needs, however, quite as much as money, and which, if secured, will do as much to build up the College and increase its usefulness. I have regarded a favorable and friendly public sentiment as of the utmost importance to the Institution, especially on the part of the most progressive farmers of the State. To secure this, I have earnestly striven since assuming my present position, have been aided greatly by the establishment and work of the Experiment Station, and I believe there is proof positive of a very gratifying measure of success. Two years ago I stated to members of this Board that I believed it would require at least five years of hard, well-sustained effort, to bring this College to a position commanding the general confidence of the public. I am still of that opinion, but now think that fully two-fifths of that work has been accomplished.

When I visited Annapolis two years ago last March, prominent members of the Legislature showed me petitions from the most active agricultural organizations in the State, protesting against any State aid for the Agricultural College. During the recent session, every one of those same organizations sent in numerous signed petitions asking the Assembly to give the College favorable consideration and material aid. With a very few exceptions, every agricultural organization in the State, active in its own locality, sent similar petitions to Annapolis. This included every County Agricultural Society in Maryland, the State Grange and most of the County Granges, besides numerous local Granges; all the Farmers' Clubs in the State except three, and every county convention of united Farmers' Clubs and several Farmers' Alliances. A Delegate from Harford county told me that he recognized almost every signature on the several petitions from that county, as that of a substantial farmer, a taxpayer and a good citizen, who



would not sign such a paper unless he was in earnest. A member from Montgomery said the same. It was stated that the petition from Queen Anne's had among its signers the five largest taxpayers in that county. None of these signatures were solicited; the form of petition was provided, (see enclosure,) but the expression was in every case cordial and voluntary. Petitions of this character were presented in the recent Assembly from 16 different counties in the State.

Similarly, two years ago, the agricultural and country press was generally against the College, being therein apparently in accord with public sentiment. The leading agricultural journal in the State had for years stoutly opposed the College, and only two or three county papers could be found to speak in its favor. I have now a scrap-book at the College, made up within a few months, which contains editorials and other articles and comments, all favorable to the College, from a dozen lines to two columns in length, taken from twenty-nine (29) of the leading agricultural and county papers of the State, published in nineteen (19) different counties.

On the first of March, *The American Farmer* published a long editorial, very favorable to the College, in which it was suggested that newspapers now thinking well of it, should say so, and that farmers and others whose confidence in the Institution had been restored, should so express themselves by letter or petition to the General Assembly. I sent a copy of this paper, and one of the Reports of the Visiting Committee of the House of Delegates, to each of forty newspapers in the State, with a short letter asking them to say what they thought of the College, as now conducted. Similar papers were sent to the agricultural organizations, with the form of petition, asking nothing, but calling attention to the suggestions of *The American Farmer*.

While not "spontaneous," the expression of public opinion thus evoked, through the country press and the petitions, was purely voluntary, unsolicited, honest and earnest. To my mind, it means a great deal. It is certainly safe to say, that among the best class of farmers in Maryland, interest in this Institution has been revived, confidence is being restored, and friendly feelings, encouragement and assistance may now be secured and held, by proper management.



This change in public sentiment regarding the College, manifested in the best agricultural sections of the State and amounting almost to a revolution, cannot be over-estimated in its bearing upon the future welfare and usefulness of the Institution.

*Future Prospects:*—With a financial condition presenting no very serious embarrassment and a public sentiment unmistakably changing to friendship and support, the future prospects of the College may be regarded as hopeful. But these circumstances plainly suggest two or three important points in its administration. It will be worse than useless to attempt to compete with any of the existing high schools, academies or classical colleges in the State. This Institution must maintain its standard, and its distinctive technical character, remaining the only one of its kind in Maryland. To meet the public expectation and demand, it must be truly a college, and an agricultural college. Make the College conform to its charter and to the ideas of those to whom it must naturally look for patronage, and the latter will come in due time. It is very certain that we cannot get students first and make the College afterwards. The College must be maintained, and the fact that it is a College, well-manned and reasonably equipped, ready to provide a course of instruction broad, liberal, yet eminently practical, and at a minimum cost, must be established and made known. Then the question of patronage and attendance can be relied upon to fix itself. Two things must be patiently awaited: those who have sons or wards to educate in our particular line, must be convinced of our ability to do good work and of the stability of the policy adopted, and they must be so favored in circumstances as to be able to bear the necessary expense.

There can be no doubt that a satisfactory conduct of the Experiment Station will increasingly attract the attention and win the friendship of the farmers and gardeners of the State, to the entire Institution. A vigorous enforcement of the recently amended Fertilizer Law, and the prompt execution of the duties of the College under it, will also do much to demonstrate the practical value of the Institution to the agricultural interests of the State.



A proposition is now before Congress which may prove of the utmost importance to the future of this College. Senator Morrill, of Vermont, has introduced a bill for the further endowment of the Agricultural Colleges receiving the benefits of the Act of 1862, of which he was the author. This bill sets apart all proceeds from the sales of public lands, and part of the income from the great land-grant railroads to constitute an educational fund. The income from this is to be divided equally among the several States (thus remedying in a measure the great inequalities in the Land Grant Act of 1862), and to be assigned to the so-called Land Grant Colleges, for their further support, until each receives \$25,000 a year. Should this become a law, the Maryland Agricultural College would be the annual recipient of a considerable sum under its provisions, which would yearly increase. It is estimated that the income of this College would be trebled within five years. A strong movement, covering the whole country, will soon be perfected, in support of this measure. The Association of American Agricultural Colleges is actively engaged in its support, the management of the campaign being in charge of a sub-committee, consisting of the Presidents of the Agricultural Colleges of Maryland, Mississippi and Ohio. A little later, the Board of Trustees of this College will be asked to use their influence, severally and collectively, in behalf of this bill and in the endeavor to secure for it the united support of the Senators and Representatives from Maryland.

Very respectfully submitted,

*President of the College.*

MD. AGR'L COLLEGE, April 9, 1890.



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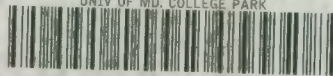




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